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SUBJECT: EMBASSY HELSINKI FOCUSES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

REF A) STATE 14726, B) STATE 006763

¶1. Building upon the successful U.S. - EU High Level Dialogue (HLD) on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development held in October 2006 in Helsinki, post is developing a series of activities to highlight the U.S. Government's pro-growth, pro-development approach for addressing climate change. Given their typical pragmatic approach to challenges and their own concerns about climate change, Finns have been receptive to a discussion that moves beyond the straitjacket of targets and timetables embodied in the Kyoto Protocol. This public outreach also supports the Embassy's 2006 Mission Performance Plan (Goal #5) which calls for strong environmental cooperation between Finland and the U.S.

¶2. During the latter half of 2006, post held several activities related to tackling the challenge of climate change. Ambassador Ware hosted a lunch for Finnish HLD participants, including Minister of Trade and Industry Pekkarinen and former Minister of Environment Enestam. Ambassador Ware also authored an Op-ed on U.S. actions to address climate change that ran on February 8 in the Helsinki Sanomat, the largest circulating paper in the Nordic countries. Embassy Helsinki has also arranged for two Finnish officials from the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) to participate in an International Visitors Program this July to learn more about the U.S. approach to climate change and clean energy at both the regional and federal levels.

¶3. Furthermore, post is considering additional reinforcing activities in the upcoming months, including:

-- Working with GLOBE schools to teach students about climate change and sustainable development using science-based activities.

-- Encouraging Finland to join the Methane-to-Markets Partnership, as highlighted in the HLD Joint Statement.

-- Arranging for Ambassador Ware to deliver a major speech on climate change at the Arktikum Center, near the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, home of Finland's International Polar Year celebrations and polar climate research activities.

--Scheduling a roundtable at the Embassy for business leaders, NGOs, government contacts, as well as journalists to discuss climate change.

--Arranging a talk by Dr. David Schultz from NOAA (on loan to the Finnish Meteorological Institute) to speak on weather and climate issues.

--Sponsoring an Earth Day Art Contest for students at the active GLOBE schools on the theme of "What is important to you about our environment?" (reftel B)

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